contemplate suicide' stating that bumper harvest of tomatoes has put farmers in Karnataka in great distress due to crash in prices;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take steps to provide relief to them; and

(c) if so, the details?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV):(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In order to protect the interest of farmers from distress sale of horticultureal commodities which are of perishable nature or have a localised production, are covered under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS). Under the MIS, on a specific request of the State Government when the prices of any horticultural commodities fall below a certain level and growers are likely to incur losses, the Government intervens in the market and makes purchases of specific quantity at mutually agreed prices on specified time to mop up excess supply of the commodity. This quantity is stored or marketed in different far off markets. The losses, if any, are shared on 50:50 basis, between Centre and concerend State.

No proposal during the year 1998-99 have been received so far from the Govt. of Karnataka for implementation of market Intervention Scheme for tomato in Karnataka to provide relief to the farmers.

Supply of Edible Oil to States

2845. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government supply edible oil to States for festival seasons only;

(b) whether State Government have demanded that this oil should be supplied for the whole year;

(c) whether, as a result of Edible Oil Packaging (Regulation) Order, 1998, the prices tend to increase, putting more burden on ration card holders; and

(d) whether Central Government would reimburse the expenditure incurred on packaging by State Governments, particularly by Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV):(a) and (b) Although earlier, the Central Government was supplying edible oils to the States for distribution through the Public Distribution System (PDS) only during the festival season, for the calendar year 1999, it has been decided to supply edible oils for distribution through the PDS, as per the demand of the State Governments throughout the year.

(c) and (d) States like Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat have been supplying edible oils through the Public Distribution System (PDS) in packaged form during 1998. The cost of packaging in poly pouches is borne by the State Governments. This was being done by the States much before the Packaging Order came into force. The edible oils supplied to the State Governments for distribution through the PDS during 1998-99, was, in any case, heavily subsidised (on an average about Rs. 6,600/- per MT). Therefore, further subsidy for packaging, is not under consideration.

Forward Trading in Oil Seeds

2846. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govenrment have allowed forward trading in eight oilseeds, oil and their cakes; and